

Message Text

SECRET

PAGE 01 BONN 02946 01 OF 02 161211Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
-----041221 161214Z /23
O 161201Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5901

S E C R E T SECTION 01 OF 02 BONN 02946

EXDIS

E.O. 11652: GDS
TAGS: PEPR GW US
SUBJECT: US-FRG RELATIONS

REFS: (A) BONN 2444; (B) BONN 2894; (C) BONN 2893

1. GERMAN FOREIGN MINISTRY AND CHANCELLERY OFFICIALS
YESTERDAY EXPRESSED TO US THEIR DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE
CURRENT MOOD IN GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONS AS WELL AS
THEIR DETERMINATION TO IMPROVE IT. A SENIOR EDITOR
OFFERED HIS ASSISTANCE.

2. KLAUS KINKEL, ONE OF FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER'S
CLOSEST COLLABORATORS, YESTERDAY REITERATED TO THE
POLITICAL COUNSELOR GENSCHER'S DEEP CONCERN ABOUT THE
IMPACT OF RECENT ECONOMIC DISCUSSIONS ON GERMAN-
AMERICAN RELATIONS AS A WHOLE. KINKEL SAID GENSCHER WAS
EXTREMELY DISTURBED ABOUT THE TONE OF THE GERMAN
PRESS COMMENTARY ON SECRETARY BLUMENTHAL'S VISIT. HE
SAID THAT GENSCHER WAS NOT SURE WHERE THIS COMMENTARY
WAS ORIGINATING BUT THAT HE WOULD DO SOME BACKGROUNDING
OF HIS OWN TO COUNTER THE CURRENT IMPRESSION, AND
WOULD ALSO VOICE HIS CONCERNS STRONGLY AT THE CABINET
MEETING WITH SCHMIDT.

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PAGE 02 BONN 02946 01 OF 02 161211Z

3. KINKEL ADDED THAT "DER SPIEGEL" WOULD BE COMING OUT
THIS WEEKEND WITH A MAJOR STORY ON THE STATE OF US-
GERMAN RELATIONS, AND THAT ONE COULD ONLY FEAR THAT
"SPIEGEL'S" TRADITIONALLY SENSATIONALIST APPROACH WOULD
FURTHER INFLAME THE ATMOSPHERE. HE SAID HE WAS MEETING
WITH A "SPIEGEL" CORRESPONDENT THAT AFTERNOON AND WOULD

ATTEMPT STRONGLY TO COUNTER THE DISTORTIONS IN THE PRESS COVERAGE.

4. DIETER LEISTER, SCHMIDT'S CHIEF OF CABINET, TOLD THE POLITICAL COUNSELOR THAT SCHMIDT HIMSELF WAS DEEPLY DISTURBED AT THE TURN EVENTS WERE TAKING. LEISTER SAID THAT THE CABINET (AT THE MEETING THAT KINKEL HAD MENTIONED EARLIER IN THE DAY) HAD DECIDED TO BEGIN BACKGROUNDING AND TO HAVE MINISTERS ISSUE STATEMENTS THAT WOULD COUNTER THE CURRENT PRESS COVERAGE AND BALANCE THE MOOD. LEISTER CITED PRESS SPOKESMAN BOELLING'S REMARKS (REF C) AS AN EXAMPLE OF GERMAN EFFORTS.

5. LEISTER SAID HE WAS AUTHORIZED TO TELL US "SEMI-OFFICIALLY" THAT THE CHANCELLOR WOULD BEND EVERY EFFORT TO PUT THESE ISSUES BACK INTO PROPER PERSPECTIVE, TO EMPHASIZE THAT THERE WAS NO MAJOR ISSUE AND THAT THE GERMAN-AMERICAN RELATIONSHIP WENT DEEPER THAN MATTERS OF ECONOMIC POLICY.

6. THEO SOMMER, CHIEF EDITOR OF THE WEEKLY "DIE ZEIT,"

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PAGE 01 BONN 02946 02 OF 02 161209Z
ACTION SS-25

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 SSO-00 /026 W
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O 161201Z FEB 78
FM AMEMBASSY BONN
TO SECSTATE WASHDC IMMEDIATE 5902

S E C R E T SECTION 02 OF 02 BONN 02946

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WHO IS SIMILARLY CONCERNED, HAS SUGGESTED TO US THE NEED FOR MORE PROMINENT EXPOSURE OF THE US POSITION. HE HAS OFFERED TO GO TO WASHINGTON FOR AN INTERVIEW -- EITHER ON THE RECORD OR ON BACKGROUND -- WITH THE PRESIDENT OR OTHER SENIOR US OFFICIALS IN ORDER TO GIVE US A FORUM TO PUT FORWARD OUR OWN VIEWS IN A BALANCED MANNER, AND TO HELP PUT ALL THESE ISSUES BACK INTO PROPER

PERSPECTIVE.

7. COMMENT: THE EMBASSY STRONGLY RECOMMENDS THAT WASHINGTON ACCEPT SOMMER'S OFFER. WE BELIEVE IT WOULD BE VERY MUCH IN THE US INTEREST TO PUT CURRENT ISSUES INTO THEIR PROPER CONTEXT AND TO REACH A BROAD RESPONSIBLE GERMAN AUDIENCE. AS WASHINGTON KNOWS, SOMMER IS ONE OF GERMANY'S MOST RESPECTED SENIOR JOURNALISTS. HE ALSO HAS IMMEDIATE ACCESS TO EVERY TOP OFFICIAL.

8. IF WASHINGTON IS DISPOSED TO INVITE SOMMER TO WASHINGTON FOR THIS PURPOSE, THE EMBASSY WOULD BE HAPPY TO SUBMIT SUGGESTIONS FOR THEMES THAT MIGHT BE MOST EFFECTIVE HERE.

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Message Attributes

Automatic Decaptioning: Z
Capture Date: 01 jan 1994
Channel Indicators: n/a
Current Classification: UNCLASSIFIED
Concepts: FOREIGN RELATIONS
Control Number: n/a
Copy: SINGLE
Draft Date: 16 feb 1978
Decaption Date: 20 Mar 2014
Decaption Note: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Action: RELEASED
Disposition Approved on Date:
Disposition Case Number: n/a
Disposition Comment: 25 YEAR REVIEW
Disposition Date: 20 Mar 2014
Disposition Event:
Disposition History: n/a
Disposition Reason:
Disposition Remarks:
Document Number: 1978BONN02946
Document Source: CORE
Document Unique ID: 00
Drafter: n/a
Enclosure: n/a
Executive Order: GS
Errors: N/A
Expiration:
Film Number: D780071-0718
Format: TEL
From: BONN
Handling Restrictions:
Image Path:
ISecure: 1
Legacy Key: link1978/newtext/t19780249/aaaabpeq.tel
Line Count: 131
Litigation Code IDs:
Litigation Codes:
Litigation History:
Locator: TEXT ON-LINE, ON MICROFILM
Message ID: 0038dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Office: ACTION SS
Original Classification: SECRET
Original Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Original Previous Classification: n/a
Original Previous Handling Restrictions: n/a
Page Count: 3
Previous Channel Indicators: n/a
Previous Classification: SECRET
Previous Handling Restrictions: EXDIS
Reference: 78 BONN 2444, 78 BONN 2894, 78 BONN 2893
Retention: 0
Review Action: RELEASED, APPROVED
Review Content Flags:
Review Date: 02 aug 2005
Review Event:
Review Exemptions: n/a
Review Media Identifier:
Review Release Date: n/a
Review Release Event: n/a
Review Transfer Date:
Review Withdrawn Fields: n/a
SAS ID: 3577886
Secure: OPEN
Status: NATIVE
Subject: US-FRG RELATIONS
TAGS: PEPR, GE, US
To: STATE
Type: TE
vdkgvwkey: odbc://SAS/SAS.dbo.SAS_Docs/0038dbd5-c288-dd11-92da-001cc4696bcc
Review Markings:
Sheryl P. Walter
Declassified/Released
US Department of State
EO Systematic Review
20 Mar 2014
Markings: Sheryl P. Walter Declassified/Released US Department of State EO Systematic Review 20 Mar 2014